



**FULL MEMBER OF THE MOLDOVA  
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
ALEKSEY ANDREYEVYCH SPASSKY**  
On the occasion of the centenary of the birth  
(1917–2017)

Aleksey Andreyevich Spassky — is an outstanding parasitologist, greatest authority on cestodology of the second half of 20th century, one of the founders of the Moldova Academy of Sciences. He was born on July 03. 1917 in a small town of Nizhegorodskaya province (Volga region) and was raised in the intellectual family of gymnasium teachers. His parents were humanitarians, however their son, being the schoolboy of regular soviet school of 1920–30s, was keen on mathematics and dreamed to be a student of physic-mathematical department of Gorki University. But because of social origin he had to enter firstly to zootechnical school and then to biochemical department of Gorki Pedagogical Institute.

And exactly here well known helminthologist P. G. Sobolev paid attention to a talented student. Under Sobolev's scientific supervision Alexey Andreyevich did his first student research works and Ph. D. thesis "To Cestodes fauna of the birds in the USSR" which was successfully

defended on the eve of the War in 1941. In February 1945 A. A. Spassky was sent to doctoral courses at helminthological laboratory of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Here A. A. Spassky was engaged in doctoral thesis devoted to one of the most numerous Cestodes family — Anoplocephalidae, under the supervision of academician K. I. Skryabin.

Anoplocephalidae is the complex, heterogeneous and practically important group of cestodes. The great analytical work was implemented in a short term, with maximal possible capacities peculiar to those times. The huge number of publications was summarized. Profound analysis of adult cestodes morphology of different species as well as larvae morphology, biology, development cycles in intermediate and final hosts was implemented. The doctoral thesis was successfully defended in 1950 and in 1951 the core study was published as "Essential Cestodology" vol. I. It was a beginning of a new set of monographs, which counts 13 volumes nowadays.

Cestodology always remained the principal topic for Spassky's scientific activity. Summarizing work on Hymenolepididae family became the next stage of his analytical research. In 1954 two considerable articles devoted to the approach to mammalian and bird Hymenolepididae taxonomy were published. 26 new genera were proved as a result of group profound analysis and apartness of evolution of these two brunches — parasites of mammalian and bird was postulated. In 1963 the first part of second volume "Essential Cestodology" was published with the species description for 17 genera. Monograph "Bird Cestodes in the USSR. Hymenolepididae" (1966) by L. P. Spasskaya with description of 240 species allocated to 52 genera can be considered as a continuation of this work.

Starting from 1959 A. A. Spassky was interested in investigation of Dilepididae, another large cestodes family. A certain amount of articles, devoted to revision of the main large genera of this family and some aberrant groups were published. In co-authorship with L. P. Spasskaya two monographs "Bird Cestodes in the USSR. Dilepididae of terrestrial birds" (1977) and "Bird Cestodes in the USSR. Dilepididae of limnophilous birds" (1978) were published later. It should be pointed out that the monograph devoted to bird cestodes of Tuva (Spasskaya, Spassky 1971) contains in detail description of Dilepididae regional species and group analysis. Totally 12 families and 15 new genera were considered in this publication.

In general, A. A. Spassky made an important contribution in study of natural system of all groups of cyclophillid cestodes. Mainly it related to large superfamilies. Besides, there are papers on the Tetrabotridae and Diphyllobotriidae taxonomy. The revision publications for general taxonomy of cyclophillid cestodes or the class Cestoda as a whole appeared time by time as a result of a new data accumulation. Numerous Spassky's works devoted to morphology, including promorphology of ribbon and larva stages of cestodes, biology and development cycles in intermediate and final hosts. The questions of parasites' evolution and phylogeny were in the field of his interests too. Alexey Andreevich paid attention to practical significance of cestodes for medical

and veterinary sciences, zoonosis problem. There are publications on other groups of helminth-nematoda, Trematoda and monogenic parasites.

Moreover, the series of faunistic works on bird cestodes of Tuva, the Komi Republic, Yakutia, Kamchatka, Chukchi Peninsula, some other USSR regions and North Vietnam were published. Collections which were gathered during the scientific expeditions under the practical guidance of Spasskiy served as a material base for research works. Spasskiy's bibliography counts 1200 publications in total. Numerous publications on different topics testify his great erudition.

In 1969 the Moldavian branch was reorganized to the Moldavian Academy of Sciences. A. A. Spassky was elected as an Academician (full member) of the Moldavian Academy of Sciences, vice-president of newly created Academy and became one among its 11 founders. Several years he served as the vice-president and later worked at the academician-secretary position of the sector for biological and chemical sciences, actively administrated the building of a new "Academic Town" at the Chisinau suburb and headed the parasitological and helminthological laboratory of Moldavian Institute of Zoology simultaneously. His further life and scientific activity were closely connected with the Institute of zoology of Moldavian Academy of Sciences and with Chisinau. Moldova became native for A. A. Spassky. Parasitological researches quickly enlarged in the 70th. Laboratory, later department, was stuffed by 20 employees (O. F. Andreiko, R. P. Shumilo, I. G. Uspenskaya, Yu. N. Kononov, M. I. Lunkashu, D. K. Erhan, St. F. Rusu, A. Ya. Moshu, etc). As early as in 1962, a laboratory created on the initiative of A. A. Spassky was headed by P. I. Nesterov. More than a dozen employees worked in the laboratory. They studied phytoneematodes of grain and industrial crops, potatoes, vegetables, melons, orchards and vineyards, ornamental and aromatic plants. Research works for helminthes, ectoparasitic and bloodsucking arthropoda of wild and domestic birds, mammalian — inhabitants of their nests and holes were launched. Besides, parasitofauna of fish from the rivers of the Dniester Basin and pond farms were studied. Under the guidance of A. A. Spassky the parasitological research group was created along the years. Aleksey Andreyevich supervised twenty-seven doctors and six professors, who has formed a parasitological school in Moldova. Following the designation of A. A. Spassky as a head of the department, the team of parasitologists was headed by Professor D. K. Erhan, who led the department until recently. The Department of Parasitology of the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova created by Academician A. A. Spassky more than 60 years ago exists and works fruitfully. It continues to be the leading center for parasitological research in Moldova. All the main directions of research laid down by the founder of the Moldovan parasitological school, Academician A. A. Spassky, persist and develop in the new conditions. Cooperation with colleagues from other countries, primarily Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, etc., is developing successfully.

A. A. Spassky was a honorary member of the Ukrainian Parasitological Scientific Society (UPSS), created in 1945 under the initiative of academician O. P. Markevich. The All-Union Parasitological Scientific Society (USSR) did not exist yet, so Ukrainian Society implemented the role of such a society de-facto by organizing regularly conferences for hundreds of specialists from all the Soviet Union. Spassky realized and highly appreciated an opportunity to communicate with colleagues during such a forum. Since the Third UPSS Conference (1960) Spasskiy took an active part in all parasitological conferences, moderated the section functioning, made reports and participated in discussions, took part in the discussion of reports and speeches supporting speakers, or sometimes making sharp remarks.

A. A. Spassky had great respect to academician A. P. Markevich — the head of Ukrainian parasitological school. A. A. Spassky valued and actively supported Markevich's idea of necessity to allocate parasitocenology as independent research. Actively promoting the creating of Parasitocenological society, A. A. Spassky participated in the workshops of this society and insistently introduced parasitocenological researches at the Moldova Institute of Zoology. Close and fruitful collaboration between Spassky and Ukrainian parasitologists continued for many years. Especially strong links were formed with helminthologists of Ukrainian Institute of Zoology. Spassky liked our laboratory stuff — V. P. Sharpilo, L. D. Sharpilo, V. V. Kornushin, L. A. Smogorzhevskaya, N. I. Iskova. He often visited laboratory in Teremki, appreciated local active atmosphere and stuff team-working. He was really pleased to spend several days at the microscope, discuss all what he saw with colleagues, talk and argue over problems of helminthofauna taxonomy. And results were always reflected in the new publications.

Academician Spassky's works were actively published in the thesis of the UPSS conferences, parasitological congresses, collected papers including "Problems of parasitology". With the emergence of the Journal "Vestnik Zoologii" A. A. Spassky becomes its permanent author. During the last 10 years of his life A. A. Spassky published 14 scientific articles in this edition and the last one was printed after his death in 2007. The list of his scientific publications counts more than 600 works, including 12 monographs — one was translated and printed in English and 423 articles in journals and collected editions. His contribution to helminthofauna taxonomy expressed in description of more than 300 new species and superspecies taxons.

In conclusion it should also be noted that the time of classic taxonomy, which was based on helminthofauna morphology (including the larval), ontogenesis particulars has gone. Molecular and full-genomis studies become the principal and mostly weighable indicators for species definition and classification now. But a lot of Spassky's taxonomy decisions have been already approved by these new methods. His genius taxonomy intuition, strong intellect and great sagacity provided immortality to A. A. Spassky as for a greatest cestodologist of our time.